



COUNT US IN 2014

King County's Point-In-Time Count of Homeless & Unstably Housed Young People

Final Revised Report, March 6, 2014



United Way of King County



**COMMITTEE TO
END HOMELESSNESS
KING COUNTY**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Count Us In is King County's annual effort to count youth and young adults (YYA) aged 12-25 who are unstably housed or homeless. This report provides data from the 4th annual Count Us In, conducted in January 2014.

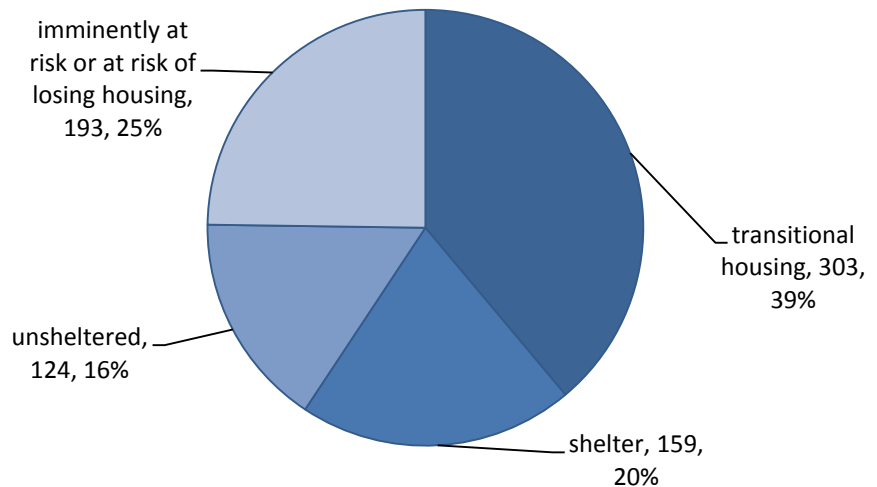
Data in this report are derived from two sources:

1. Count Us In survey- This survey of youth is conducted by youth service providers and community partners from across the county; AND
2. Safe Harbors- Safe Harbors is King County's homeless management information system (HMIS).

Based on these data, we know that 779¹ youth and young adults in King County were homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014. Of these youth:

- 462 were staying in shelter or transitional housing programs and identified through HMIS.
- 317 were identified through Count Us In surveys. Of these youth,
 - 124 were unsheltered; and
 - 193 were imminently at risk or at risk of losing their housing.

housing status of youth and young adults, january 22, 2014
total=779



An additional 222 youth who were not unstably housed or homeless on January 22, 2014 reported having been unstably housed at some point in the past.

homeless and unstably housed youth were...

...50% female.
...22% LGBTQ.
...12% under age 18.
...51% of color.
...from nearly every zip code in King County.

These findings are similar to Count Us In results in previous years. In 2013, 776 YYAs were identified as homeless or unstably housed (compared to 779 in 2014). Of the 776 homeless/ unstably housed YYA identified in 2013, 145 were in shelter, 302 were in transitional housing, 215 were imminently at risk or at risk of losing their housing, and 114 were unsheltered.

This report includes an introduction providing background on Count Us In and results showing data on all homeless and unstably housed youth on the night of Count Us In. The report's appendices provide further detail on the Count Us In methodology, including a copy of the survey and survey training tool, definitions and terminology, and a listing of community partners participating in the survey.

Count Us In documents the nature and extent of homelessness among youth in King County, and builds better understanding about this unique population, their reasons for experiencing homelessness, and their background. Data from Count Us In inform

our regional efforts to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness, helping us understand the scope of the problem and whether we are making progress toward solving it.

¹ A previous report issued in February 2014 reported 777 YYAs as homeless or unstably housed. This March 2014 update represents final Count Us In data, including a change in the total number of homeless and unstably housed YYAs to 779.

INTRODUCTION

What is Count Us in?

Count Us In is King County's count of homeless and unstably housed youth and young adults (YYA). January 2014 was our fourth year of conducting Count Us In.

A steering committee consisting of staff from King County Committee to End Homelessness, the City of Seattle, the United Way of King County and agencies serving youth and young adults organizes Count Us In.

Count Us In 2014 took place alongside our community's One Night Count, an annual point in time count of people who are experiencing homelessness mandated by HUD and organized locally by Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH).² Count Us In is a complementary effort to the One Night Count, representing our community's deeper look into the issue of YYA homelessness.

Count Us In 2014 built on the lessons learned during our previous Count Us In events from 2011- 2013, and engaged more community partners and youth than in any previous year. In addition, the 2014 event was informed by our community's participation in the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)'s Youth Count Pilot in 2013, which sought to document effective strategies for counting homeless youth. The Youth Count Pilot involved nine locations across the country – including King County and the balance of Washington State – to test creative methodologies to count homeless youth and young adults and to participate in a cross-site evaluation.³

Relationship of Count Us In to Our Regional Effort to Prevent and End YYA Homelessness

In 2013, more than 100 diverse stakeholders— including the City of Seattle, King County, service providers, United Way of King County, private funders, suburban cities and young people who have experienced homelessness —came together to issue the *Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County by 2020*. The Plan puts young people at the center, surrounding them with what we know they need: stable housing, encouraging adults, emotional support, education, and opportunities to gain work experience.

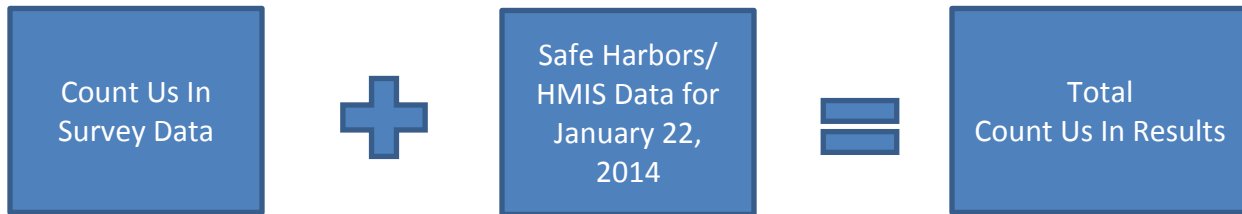
The Comprehensive Plan measures success based on four benchmarks, one of which is that fewer YYA experience homelessness. Under the Comprehensive Plan, the data source to measure this benchmark is the number of unsheltered youth in Count Us In. This figure was 114 YYAs in 2013 and 124 YYAs in 2014.

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan places an emphasis on learning more about this population, acknowledging that developing effective strategies to prevent and end YYA homelessness requires us to better understand the prevalence of youth homelessness, the characteristics and needs of these young people, and where they come from. By providing data on the number of unsheltered and unstably housed youth at any given time and a profile of these youth with respect to factors such as age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, previous experience in foster care or detention, and prior zip codes, Count Us In is a critical tool in our regional effort to better understand this population and therefore develop services to more effectively meet their needs. In addition, Count Us In is the only tool that documents homeless and unstably housed YYA who may not be accessing services.

² Results from the 2014 One Night Count are available at http://homelessinfo.org/what_we_do/one_night_count/2014_results.php.

³ An evaluation of the Youth Count pilot can be found at <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412872-youth-count-process-study.pdf>.

Methodology for 2014 Count Us In: Using Survey and HMIS Data to Create a Snapshot of Youth Homelessness



Count Us In uses a survey of YYA *and* HMIS data to create an overall profile of youth homelessness on a single day.

Count Us In Surveys

King County homeless youth and young adult providers and community partners surveyed young people as part of Count Us In during the day and early evening of January 23, 2014, obtaining information about young people's housing status, including where they had stayed the night before (January 22, 2014).⁴ Surveys were conducted by a total of 46 agencies and community partners.⁵

Surveys were administered by agency staff and volunteers. Prior to the event, the Count Us In steering committee provided training on the survey and the count methodology to agency staff and volunteers, and distributed t-shirts and posters to publicize the event. The United Way of King County provided a small stipend to each participating provider agency. Each provider used the stipend to partially support their agency's participation in the count, including providing incentives (such as food or bus tokens) to encourage youth participation in some locations.

Count Us In took place on the day prior to King County's One Night Count; these complementary events use a different methodology and provide data for different purposes. As the day of January 23rd drew to an end and the overnight One Night Count began, agencies serving homeless youth hosted youth "sleepover" events during the night/early morning of January 23-24. Youth who would otherwise be sleeping on the streets were encouraged to gather at these locations at night in order to complete a Count Us In survey and to be counted as part of the One Night Count between 2am and 5am.⁶

Over 1500 surveys were completed for Count Us In. Surveys not eligible to be included in the analysis included youth who had

Count Us In 2014: 46 Agencies & Partners

- *19 youth serving agencies* (an increase from 17 in 2013) surveyed young people over the telephone, in public areas where youth congregate, and at drop in centers and meal programs for homeless youth.
- The King County and Seattle Public Library Systems surveyed youth at a total of *21 library branches* (an increase from 12 branches in 2013).
- Seattle Parks and Recreation surveyed youth at *6 recreation centers* (an increase from 4 in 2013).
- School Districts in King County directed youth to the closest count location via posters displayed at middle and high schools.

⁴ The Count Us In survey and training tool are provided as Appendix A.

⁵ Appendix C provides a list of all Count Us In partners.

⁶ Results from the 2014 One Night Count are available at http://homelessinfo.org/what_we_do/one_night_count/2014_results.php.

already completed a survey, those had stayed in a shelter or transitional housing program, youth whose survey responses indicated that they were stably housed, or youth who were not within the valid age range. 317 surveys indicated that a youth was homeless or unstably housed; these youth are included in the analysis in this report.⁷ An additional 222 surveys identified youth who were not homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014, but who reported having been unstably housed in the past.

A unique element of Count Us In is the partnership between agencies in the homeless youth continuum of care, agencies serving youth and families without an explicit focus on homelessness, and community partners such as libraries and parks and recreation. Participation in Count Us In brings together agencies and community organizations who might not otherwise be consider partnering in their work. Efforts are ongoing to ensure count methodology is appropriate and inclusive for all youth, regardless of housing status or self-identification as homeless.

After the count, the Count Us In steering committee facilitated a debrief session, asking count locations to share stories, feedback and comments about the count, activities and survey. This information will be used to improve subsequent years of Count Us In.

HMIS Data

In addition to the survey process described above, data from the Safe Harbors HMIS were also pulled for the night prior to the count to correspond with the “where you stayed last night” question on the survey. Specifically, HMIS data show that 462 YYA (ages 12-25) unaccompanied by parents or guardians were in shelters and transitional living programs on the night of January 22, 2014.

Limitations

This year’s Count Us In effort continued to build on a growing understanding of how to effectively count young people experiencing homelessness or housing instability in our community.⁸ Still, there are limitations to the data. The data reflect, in part, the profiles of youth who use participating programs. This might result in omitting youth who do not access services, are outside the target demographic or geographic reach of these programs, and those who did not respond to the outreach methods employed. The inclusion of providers not focused exclusively on serving homeless youth, King County and Seattle public library branches, and City of Seattle Parks and Recreation locations is an effort to address some of these limitations.

The dataset includes a large sample of homeless and unstably housed youth in King County and therefore the demographic profile is meaningful. These demographic data represent the best available point-in-time profile of our homeless/unstably housed youth and young adult population.

⁷ Appendix B, “Definitions and Terminology,” details how survey data were used to determine which youth were unsheltered or unstably housed.

⁸ Appendix D provides an overview of lessons learned about counting homeless and unstably housed youth through King County’s Count Us In experience.

RESULTS

On the night of January 22, 2014, 779 YYA ages 12-25 were homeless or unstably housed based on data from HMIS and Count Us In surveys. Detailed data are presented below in two sections:

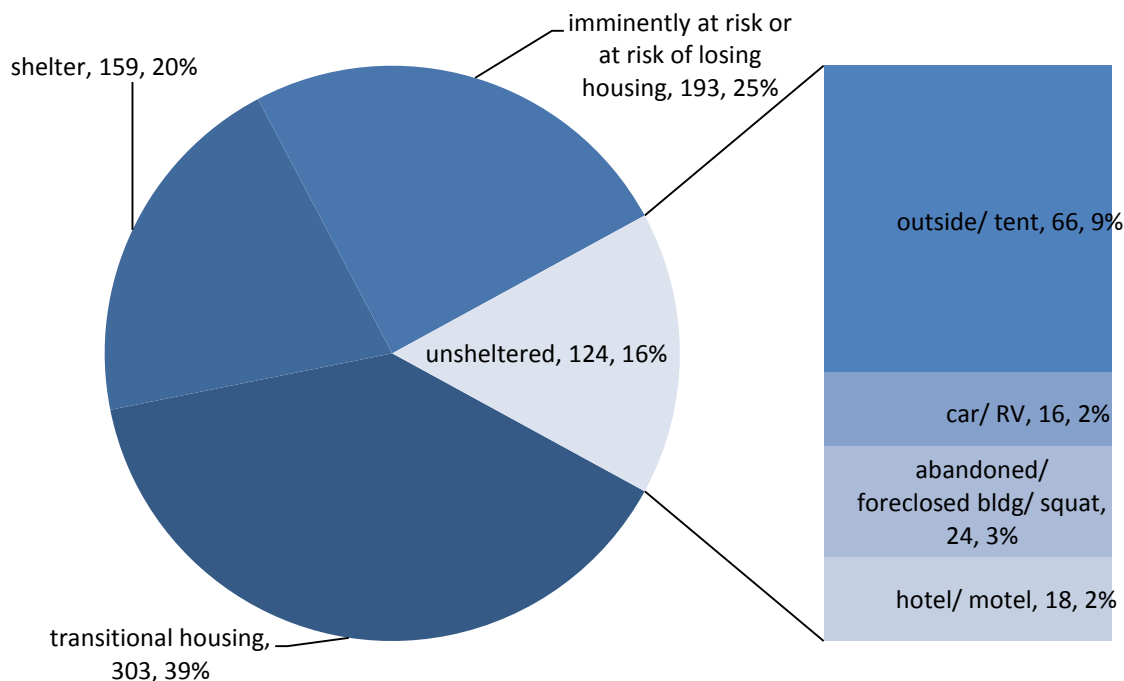
- 1. All Youth and Young Adults: Demographic Profile-** This section will provide data for the 779 youth identified through the combination of Count Us In surveys and HMIS data as homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014.
- 2. Survey Youth Only: Additional Demographic Profile-** This section will provide data for a subset of the total youth identified as homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014- only the 317 youth identified through Count Us In surveys. This section includes information on data such as sexual orientation gathered through surveys but not available in HMIS.

An additional 222 youth who were not unstably housed or homeless on the night of January 22, 2014 were identified through Count Us In surveys as having been previously unstably housed. These youth are not included in the demographic profiles on the following pages because they were not unstably housed or homeless on the night of January 22, 2014; however, the large number of these youth highlights that many youth experience periods of both stable and unstable housing over time.

All Youth and Young Adults: Demographic Profile

This section provides data for the 779 youth identified through the combination of Count Us In surveys and HMIS data as homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014.

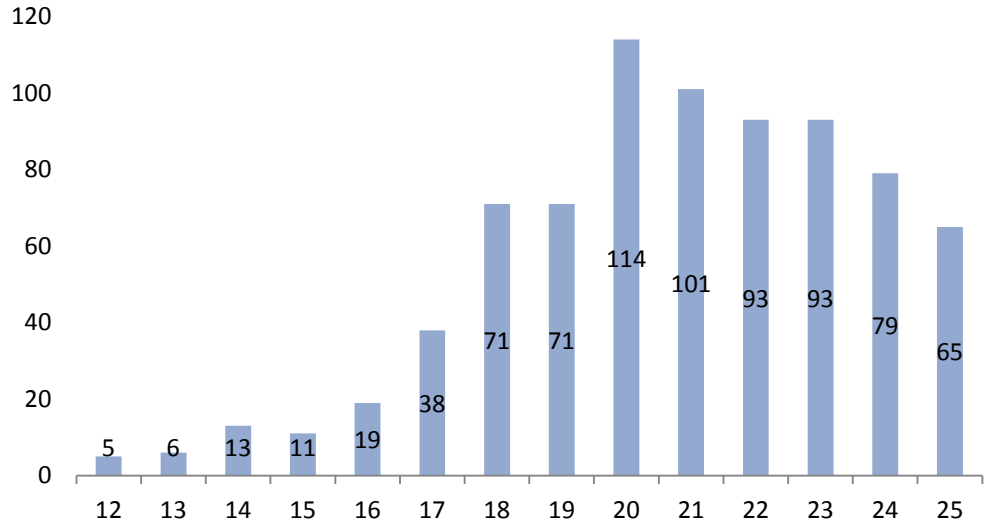
housing status of youth & young adults, january 22, 2014
total= 779



All Youth and Young Adults: Demographic Profile (continued)

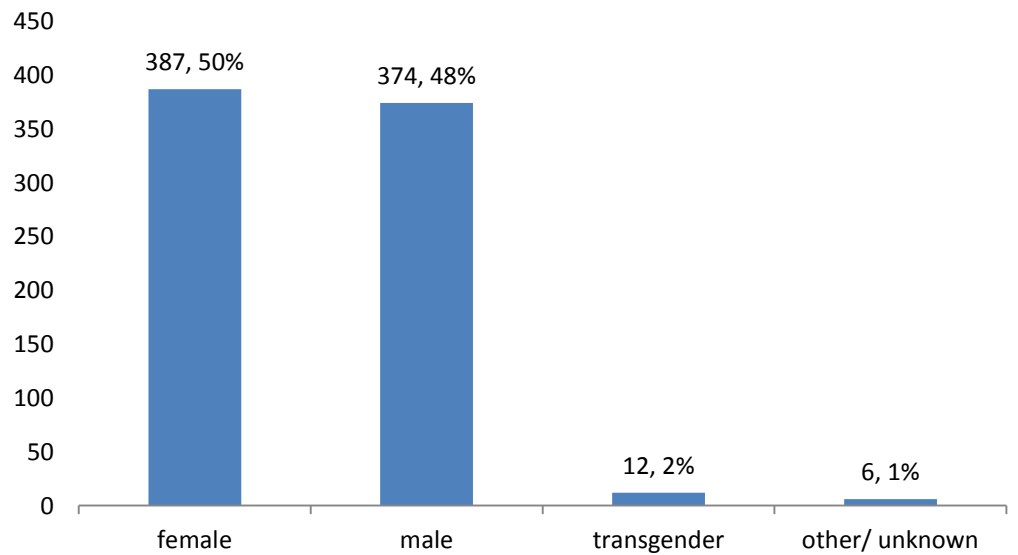
12% of homeless and unstably housed youth were under age 18, 33 % were 18-20, and 55% were age 21-25.

ages of homeless and unstably housed youth



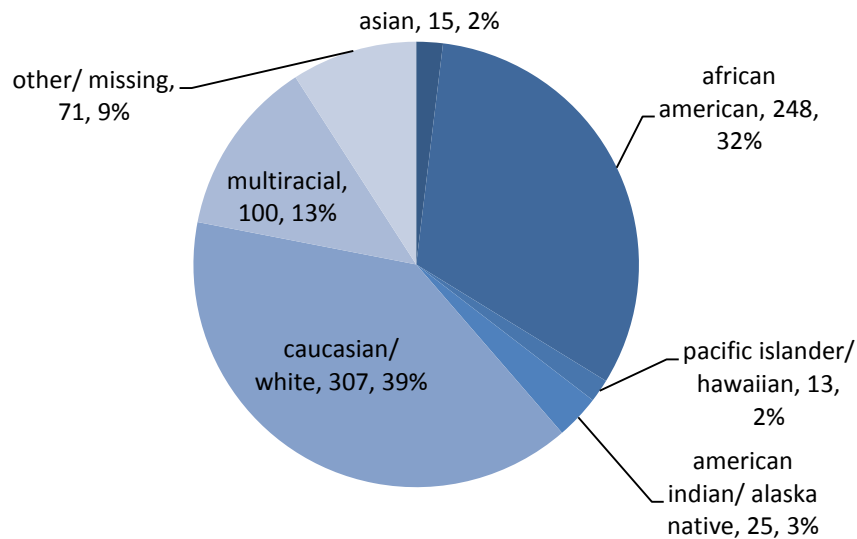
50% of homeless and unstably housed youth identified as female, 48% identified as male, and 2% identified as transgender.

gender

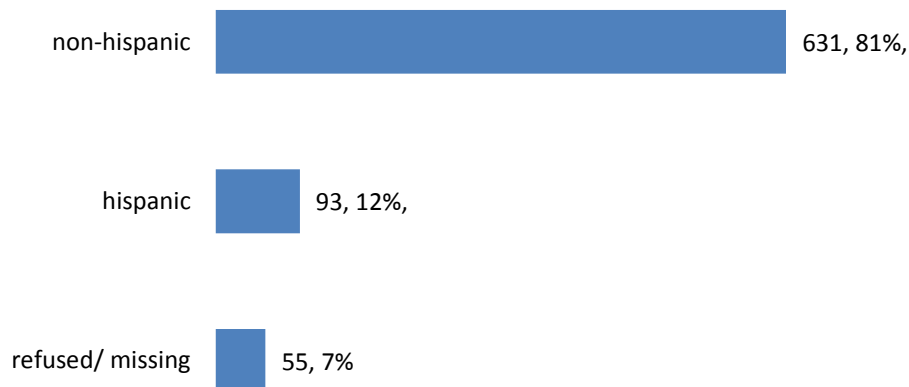


All Youth and Young Adults: Demographic Profile (continued)

race of homeless/ unstably housed youth



ethnicity of homeless/ unstably housed youth

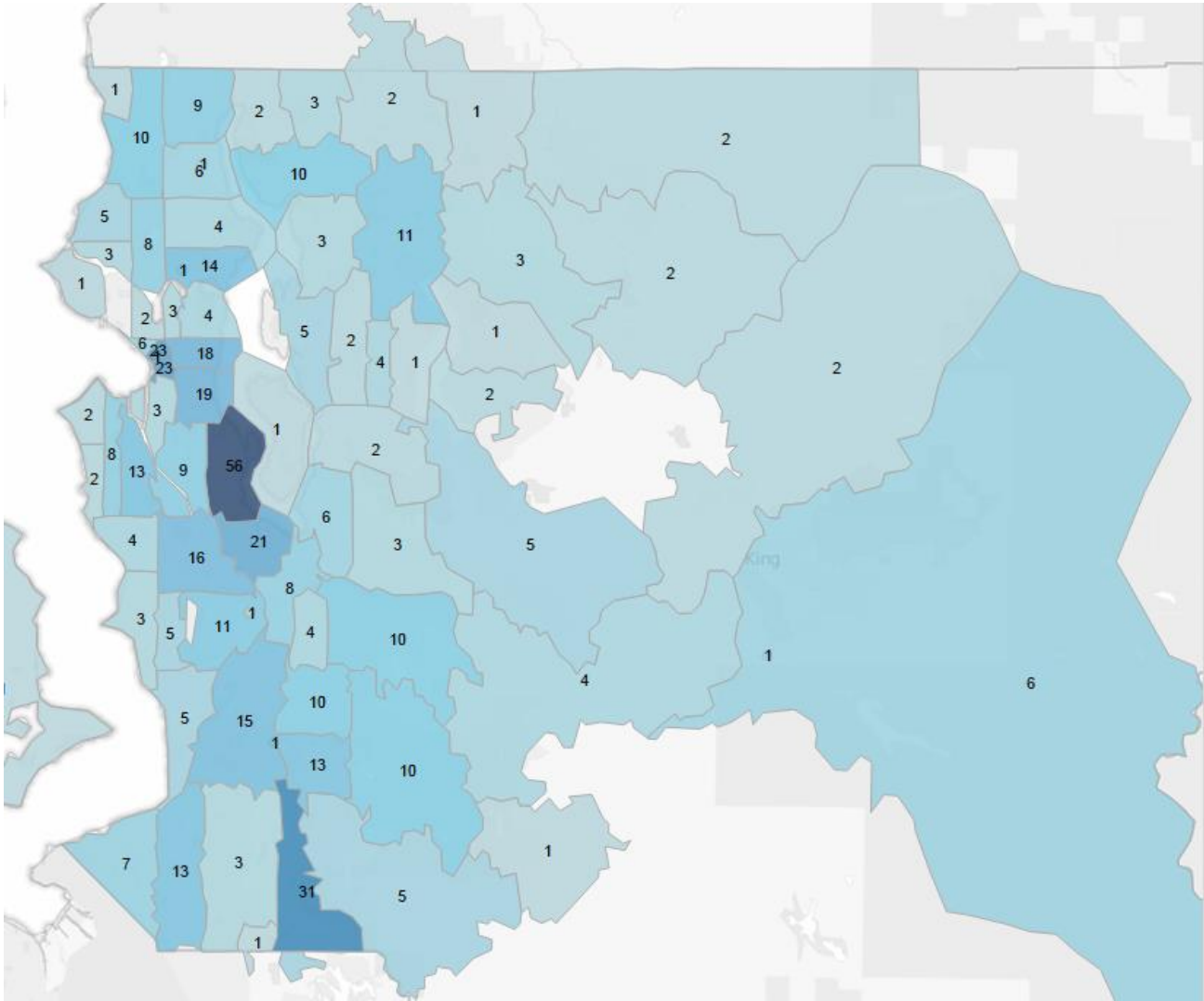


51% of homeless and unstably housed youth were youth of color. This compares to 35% of all King County residents, and 42% of King County residents living below poverty. This is consistent with previous data and research showing that youth of color are disproportionately represented among homeless youth. Reducing the overrepresentation of youth of color among homeless YYA is a key priority identified in the Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness and is one of the benchmarks by which the Plan's success will be measured.

12% of homeless/ unstably housed youth were Hispanic.

All Youth and Young Adults: Demographic Profile (continued)

Last Permanent Zip Code



Zip	#	Zip	#	Zip	#	Zip	#
98001	3	98035	1	98077	1	98125	6
98002	31	98038	4	98092	5	98126	8
98003	13	98040	1	98101	23	98133	10
98004	5	98042	10	98102	3	98134	3
98005	2	98045	6	98103	8	98136	2
98006	2	98047	1	98104	23	98138	1
98007	4	98052	11	98105	14	98144	19
98008	1	98053	3	98106	13	98145	1
98010	1	98054	1	98107	3	98146	4
98011	3	98055	4	98108	9	98148	5
98014	2	98056	6	98109	2	98155	9
98023	7	98057	8	98111	1	98165	1
98027	5	98058	10	98112	4	98166	3
98028	2	98059	3	98115	4	98168	16
98030	13	98065	2	98116	2	98177	1
98031	10	98070	1	98117	5	98178	21
98032	15	98072	2	98118	56	98188	11
98033	3	98074	1	98121	6	98198	5
98034	10	98075	2	98122	18	98199	1

Of the 779 homeless or unstably housed YYAs:

- The last zip code for 538 YYAs (69%) was in King County (see details in table at left and map above)
- The last zip code for 137 YYAs was outside King County (18%).
- Zip code data were unavailable for 104 YYAs (13%).

Survey Youth Only: Additional Demographic Profile

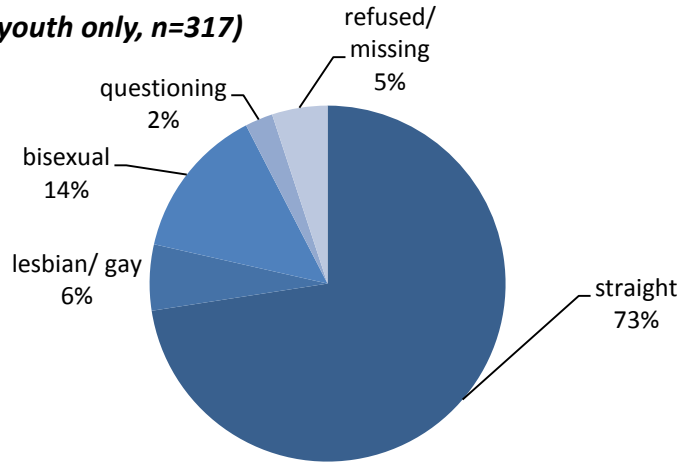
This section provide data for a subset of the total youth identified as homeless or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014- only the 317 youth identified through Count Us In surveys. This section includes information on data such as sexual orientation gathered through surveys but not available in HMIS.

Consistent with other national and local research related to homeless youth, Count Us In surveys indicate that a large percentage (22%) of homeless youth are LGBTQ. Reducing the overrepresentation of LGBTQ youth among homeless YYA is a key priority identified in the Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness and is one of the benchmarks by which the Plan's success will be measured.

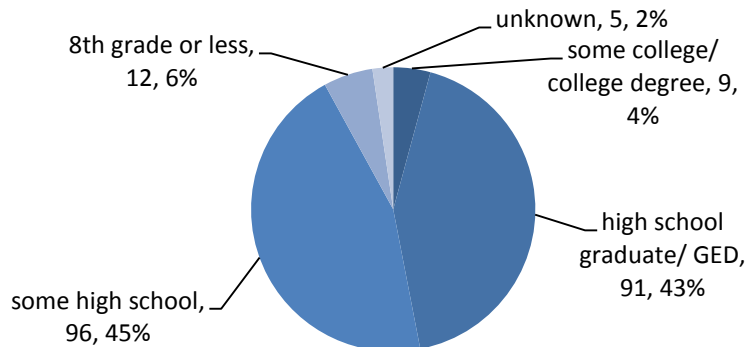
30% (n=90) of all survey youth are currently enrolled in school. Of the 213 youth not enrolled in school, 47% have graduated from high school, obtained a GED and/or completed some college.

Most homeless and/or unstably housed youth identified through Count Us In surveys are looking for work, and 1 in 5 is employed. In addition, a significant minority have a history of foster care or detention/ jail. A smaller number of those surveyed are pregnant or parenting.

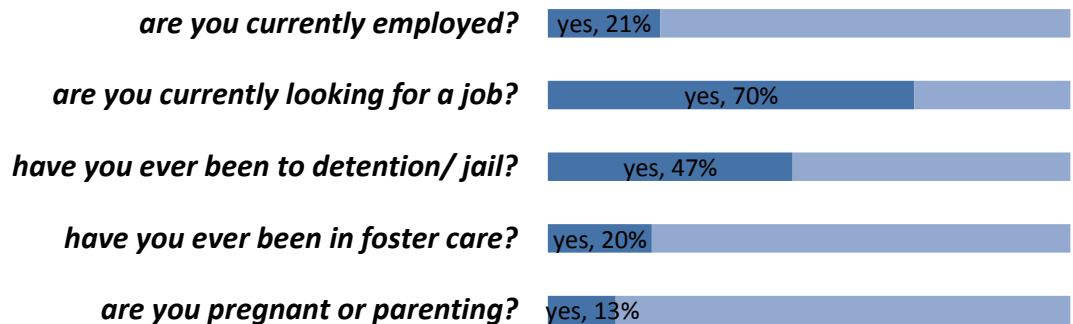
sexual orientation (survey youth only, n=317)



highest level of educational attainment (survey youth not currently enrolled in school= 213)



additional data (survey youth only, n=317)



Survey Youth Only: Additional Demographic Profile (continued)

Connection of homeless and unstably housed YYAs with family

Of the 317 YYAs identified by the Count Us In Survey as homeless or unstably housed:

- 60 (19%) reported having stayed with their parents or other relatives the night before Count Us In. These YYAs were considered unstably housed because they reported that they could not or did not know if they could stay in that same place for the next 30 days.
- 129 (41%) reported having stayed with their parents or other relatives at some point during the previous 3 months.

A significant minority of homeless and unstably housed YYAs report having stayed with their parents or other relatives the night before and/or within the past 3 months. The Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End YYA Homelessness includes a focus on family reunification, seeking to prevent youth homelessness by connecting YYAs with family whenever it is possible and safe.

APPENDICES

- A. Count Us In 2014 Survey and Training Tool
- B. Definitions and Terminology
- C. Participating Count Us In 2014 sites
- D. Point-In-Time Youth Counts: Lessons Learned in King County



**Youth & Young Adult (age 12 – 25)
Housing Survey**

Survey ID:

Have you already taken this survey today? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Age: _____

Zip code of last permanent address: _____

Gender (check all that apply) : ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgender ☐ Other

Race (check all that apply):

- ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ African American/ Black
☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ☐ Caucasian/White
☐ Other

Ethnicity: ☐ Hispanic ☐ Non-Hispanic

Sexual Orientation: ☐ Straight ☐ Lesbian or Gay ☐ Bisexual ☐ I don't know/questioning ☐ Refused

Where did you stay last night? (Check One)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> With my parent(s) indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> In my own apartment/house | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With my friend(s) indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned/foreclosed building/squat | <input type="checkbox"/> Jail/juv detention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With my relative(s) indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/alcohol treatment center | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Living Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/motel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car/RV | | <input type="checkbox"/> Outside/Tent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Can you live where you stayed last night for the next month? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I Don't Know

Where did you live in the last 3 months? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> With my parent(s) indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> In my own apartment/house | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With my friend(s) indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned/foreclosed building/squat | <input type="checkbox"/> Jail/juv detention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With my relative(s) indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/alcohol treatment center | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional living program | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/motel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car/RV | | <input type="checkbox"/> Outside/Tent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Do you have a place where you can sleep at night on a regular basis? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has there been a time in the past when you didn't know where you would be sleeping at night? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is the last grade you completed? _____ **Are you currently enrolled in school?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you currently looking for a job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever been in foster care?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you ever been to detention or jail?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you pregnant or parenting?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2014 Count Us In Survey Training Tool



This document provides training information on the 2014 Count Us In Unstably Housed or Homeless Youth and Young Adult (YYA) survey. Staff/volunteers can use this sheet as a reference to help participants answer the survey questions accurately and understand the usefulness of the information.

On January 23, 2014 and into the early morning of January 24th for slumber party sites, service providers across King County in coordination with United Way of King County, will host a point in time count. The goal of this effort is to gain a clearer understanding of the number of young people without a stable place to live on any given night in King County. By enhancing the King County community's knowledge of this issue, we can further our efforts to create a community where no youth or young adult is left without a place to call home.

Have you already taken this survey today?

This question is very important because it is the one question used to de-duplicate the Count Us In survey. As you ask the question, show the YYA the form so they can identify if they have taken the survey that day. If the YYA answers "Yes" they completed the survey already that day, do not have them complete another survey.

Basic demographic information (Age, Zip Code, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation)

These questions will be used to help determine the characteristics of the YYA unstably housed or homeless population and how they identify. This information can be used to help streamline services and cater to the identified population better.

Specific notes:

- Zip Code: The phrasing on the survey "Zip code of last permanent address" is consistent with how this information is collected in HMIS. A more youth-friendly way to ask this may be "*What is your family's home zip code or your last permanent zip code?*"
- Race: YYA's may choose as many Race options as they identify with.
- Gender: YYA's may choose as many Gender options as they identify with.

Where did you stay last night? (Check One)

This asks the YYA where they stayed last night – check one option only.

Can you live where you stayed last night for the next month?

This question determines whether a YYA is permanently housed verses unstably housed or homeless. If the YYA is moving from place to place during the month, mark "No" for this question. If the YYA is at-risk of eviction from their current housing within the next month, mark "No" for this question. If the YYA is unsure where they will stay for the entire month, mark "I don't know" for this question.

Where did you live in the last 3 months?

This asks the YYA where they have stayed in the past 3 months. YYA can check all that apply if they have stayed at more than one of the locations over the past three months.

Location explanations are as follows:

With my parent(s), with my friend(s), or with my relative(s) indoors –includes living with family or friends on a permanent basis (no plans to leave within 90 days) or temporary basis (night-to-night sleeping on a couch/ roof over their head, but a different couch each night/ looking for a couch to sleep on each night/ leaving before friend's parents get up because they are not allowed to sleep there/ a place to stay, but the YYA cannot stay there for over a month, etc.). Does not include staying with any of the above in a car, abandoned building, shelter or outdoors.

2014 Count Us In Survey Training Tool



Car/RV or Abandoned/foreclosed building/squat or Outside/Tent – includes YYA's who are living outside, under bridges, in the park, in doorways, in alley ways, etc. Abandoned/foreclosed building/squat includes YYA's who are squatting or illegally living in foreclosed or empty homes/trespassing. Living in a car includes YYA's finding shelter in a car, van, or camper. YYA's living in a tent includes any young person living outside in a tent as housing. Any place not meant for habitation also falls into these categories.

Hotel/Motel (paid for by you, housing voucher, or an agency) – includes YYA's that are staying in a hotel or motel week-to-week or day-to-day due to a lack of money for long term housing. This situation is temporary and cannot be sustained. Some agencies provide motel/hotel vouchers, or an agency subsidy for this service. YYA's receiving vouchers or subsidies are included in this category as well.

In my own apartment/house– includes private apartment or home, renting a room, or subsidized rental units (section 8, other Housing Authority vouchers, permanent supportive housing, or other subsidized non-time limited housing apartments).

Transitional Living Program (not associated with foster care) – includes most Transitional Living Programs in which age and/or time-limits are a factor such as YouthCare housing, YMCA shared housing, United Indians of All Tribes Youth Home, etc. This does not include juvenile detention facilities such as Spruce Street or foster care temporary placement homes.

Shelter – includes emergency shelter for youth, young adults, single adult men or women, and families (for young parents). Some specific youth and young adult shelters include YouthCare's The Shelter (for teens), South County Youth Shelter, Youth Haven Kenmore, Youth Haven Bellevue, Roots, The Landing, and the Orion Center Young Adult Shelter. Also includes YYA's who are staying in a shelter with parents, friends, and/or relatives.

Foster home – includes youth currently under the care of DSHS (under 18) who are wards of the state, or young adults who have signed a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) with the state (if over 18) and live in foster homes or a temporary foster care facility.

Jail/ Juv detention – includes any YYA's who were in jail or prison. This also includes youth who stayed in county juvenile detention facilities, in a Crisis Residential Center such as Spruce Street, or in a residential program that supports youth serving time in their program.

Hospital – includes YYA's who were admitted into the hospital for any reason including but not limited to the following reasons: medical, mental health, and chemical dependency.

Drug/Alcohol Treatment Center – includes a substance abuse inpatient treatment facility/rehab or a detox facility.

Other – this category is meant to capture all other options that may not fit into any of the above categories. Do not check this if the YYA is unsure, please look over the options with them and help them decide if their situation fits into one of the above categories before checking this box.

Do you have a place where you can sleep at night on a regular basis?

If the YYA is unsure of where they will sleep from night to night, check yes.

Has there been a time in the past when you didn't know where you would be sleeping at night?

If the YYA has ever been unsure of where they would sleep from night to night, check yes.

Education Status (What is the last grade you completed? Are you currently enrolled in school?)

2014 Count Us In Survey Training Tool



Write in the last grade completed and if the YYA is currently enrolled in school, which can include college, technical school, high school, or GED programs. These questions are designed to tell us more about the YYA's education history and goals.

Employment Status (Do you have a job? Are you currently looking for a job?)

These are yes/no questions designed to tell us more about the YYA's employment circumstances and goals.

Have you ever been in foster care?

Have you ever been to detention or jail?

Are you pregnant or parenting?

These are yes/no questions designed to tell us more about the YYA's circumstances.

Survey Instructions:

1. PLEASE make sure that youth or young adults have filled out the *entire* survey before accepting it. Please have staff available to review submitted surveys and work with youth to answer any missed questions.

2. Your agency will receive a packet of surveys with a cover sheet with your agency name and the number of surveys provided. Each survey will be numbered.

3. After the count, please fill in the number of surveys that were used on the cover sheet (we will assess completeness/ validity) and BRING ALL SURVEYS TO THE REQUIRED COUNT US IN DEBRIEF ON JANUARY 27 (10-11:30AM, Renton Library, 100 Mill Ave S, Renton)

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX B

Definitions and Terminology

YYA—youth and young adults

Survey Youth—YYA who completed the Count Us In survey on January 23, 2014 and met the following criteria:

- Were between 12-25 years of age
- Were either at risk of losing housing, imminently at risk of losing housing, or unsheltered.
- Did not stay in shelter or transitional housing the night of January 22, 2014. Surveys of youth who stayed in shelter or transitional housing on the night of January 22, 2014 were removed from the eligible data to avoid duplication of HMIS data.

Unsheltered—housing status of YYA who slept in one of the following locations: outside, tent, car/RV, hotel/motel, abandoned building.⁹

Imminently at risk of losing housing—housing status of YYA who a) did not stay in shelter or transitional housing and b) could not stay in the same place as the night of January 22, 2014 for the following month.

At risk of losing housing—housing status of YYA who a) did not stay in a shelter or transitional housing and b) did not know whether they could stay in the same place as the night of January 22 for the following month.

Unstably housed—YYA either imminently at risk of losing housing or at risk of losing housing.

Previously unstably housed—YYA who were not unsheltered or unstably housed on the night of January 22, 2014, but who indicated that there had been a time in the past when they did not know where they would be sleeping at night. These youth are not included in the full demographic analysis.

⁹ Count Us In data in 2011-2012 used the term “literally homeless” to describe youth who slept outside, or in a tent, car/RV, hotel/motel or abandoned building. To avoid confusion with the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) definition of “literally homeless”, Count Us In reports beginning with 2013 use the term “unsheltered” instead of “literally homeless” to describe these youth.

APPENDIX C

Count Us In Sites

Agency	Total # Surveyed	# Analyzed
Asian Counseling & Referral Service	7	5
Auburn Youth Resources	118	84
Consejo Counseling and Referral Services	43	8
Friends of Youth	96	44
King County Library System- Auburn*	13	6
King County Library System- Bothell*	3	0
King County Library System- Burien*	7	2
King County Library System- Covington*	10	3
King County Library System- Duvall*	0	0
King County Library System- Federal Way*	0	0
King County Library System- Kent*	14	6
King County Library System- Kingsgate*	16	2
King County Library System- Lake Hills*	0	0
King County Library System- North Bend*	5	3
King County Library System- Redmond*	1	0
King County Library System- Renton*	8	4
King County Library System- Skyway*	11	2
King County Library System- White Center*	22	4
King County Library System-Richmond Beach*	0	0
Lifelong AIDS Alliance	14	12
NeighborCare Health – 45 th St Youth Clinic	8	4
New Horizons Ministries	59	25
Northwest Network & Queer Youth Space*	11	6
Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets	11	11
POCAAN/Communities Uniting Rainier Beach (CURB)	90	48
Renton Youth Source	35	15
Rising Out of the Shadows (ROOTS)	6	0
Seattle Parks & Recreation- Internat'l Dist./ Chinatown*	0	0
Seattle Parks & Recreation- Jefferson	99	14
Seattle Parks & Recreation- Rainier	40	2
Seattle Parks & Recreation- Rainier Beach*	44	11
Seattle Parks & Recreation- Southwest	50	6
Seattle Parks & Recreation- Van Asselt	40	2
Seattle Public Library- Ballard	8	5
Seattle Public Library- Capitol Hill	22	3
Seattle Public Library- Central	40	11
Seattle Public Library- Columbia*	6	2
Seattle Public Library- Northgate	15	4
Seattle Public Library- Southwest*	9	0
Southeast Youth and Family Services*	19	8
Teen Feed	66	30
Therapeutic Health Services	243	50
Union Gospel Mission	81	13
Washington Asian Pacific Islander Community Services*	20	9
YMCA Young Adult Services	41	17
YouthCare	91	62
	1542	543

*Denotes new partner in 2014. Two locations that participated in 2013, Atlantic Street Center and KCLS Foster Library, did not participate in 2014.

Over 1500 surveys were completed for Count Us In. Surveys not eligible to be included in the analysis indicated that youth had already completed a survey, had stayed in a shelter or transitional housing program, were stably housed, or were not within the valid age range. 543 surveys indicated that a youth was currently or previously unsheltered or unstably housed. These surveys are included in the analysis in this report.

Point-In-Time Youth Counts: Promising Practices from King County

Key lessons from King County's four years of experience with conducting counts of homeless and unstably housed YYA include:

- *Involving partners beyond the homeless YYA continuum*- Agencies providing drop-in, outreach, and case management services to homeless youth are critical partners in Count Us In. In addition, by partnering with libraries, recreation centers, and agencies that provide services to youth and families who do not necessarily identify as homeless or unstably housed, we are able to reach a much broader population of YYAs and more accurately document the extent of housing instability in our community.
- *Survey youth about housing status, not about homelessness*- Because many youth, particularly youth of color, do not self-identify as homeless, our community has found it useful to characterize the Count Us In survey as being about housing status, not about homelessness. We want to survey as broad a population of youth as possible, not restrict the process to youth who consider themselves homeless.
- *Keep it simple—a one page survey*- Although it would be useful to gather even more information about the experiences and needs of these young people, we are aware that a long and involved survey instrument will be a deterrent to completion, especially for YYA who are not engaged in services. For this reason, our survey is no more than one page.
- *Involve young people*- Youth have been meaningfully involved in Count Us In efforts. YYAs have suggested edits to the survey tool, worked with count locations to plan events and activities to attract youth, and served as outreach workers (with payment of a stipend) to connect with youth to complete the survey. In 2014, youth will be involved in advocacy and communications efforts with Count Us In data.
- *Allow agencies flexibility & funding to reach youth*- Agencies have the flexibility to reach out to youth in whatever way they think would be most effective during the count time period- for example, through phone calls, street outreach, drop-in locations, working with youth on their caseloads, or setting up count tables in areas frequented by young people. In addition, the United Way of King County provides a stipend to participating count locations, and use of these funds is not restricted. Agencies use this money for a variety of events and activities to attract young people. For example, in 2014, agencies used their stipends to host meals and movies, hand out candy bars, and set up a game truck in a supermarket parking lot to attract youth.
- *Involvement of school districts*- Schools are educated about Count Us In, and are provided with posters and informational materials to publicize the event. Schools are asked to direct youth to the nearest count location, such as a library, to complete a Count Us In survey. Strengthening our communication and partnership with local school districts is an area of potential growth for future counts.
- *Gather feedback to improve subsequent years of Count Us In*- After the count, the Count Us In steering committee facilitates a debrief session, asking count locations to share stories, feedback and comments about the count, activities and survey. This information is used to improve subsequent years of Count Us In. At this year's debrief session, suggestions from count locations included providing publicity materials earlier to allow more time to spread the word about the event, providing more detailed publicity materials, using social media to promote the count, and considering allowing for electronic administration of surveys. In addition, sites suggested enhancing partnerships with schools and community colleges.

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Count Us In Steering Committee

City of Seattle Human Services Department, Committee to End Homelessness, Friends of Youth, United Way of King County, YouthCare

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Data Analysis and Report Authors

Marci Curtin, Megan Gibbard, Carrie Hennen, Katie Hong, Renee Lamberjack, Dwight Mizoguchi, Courtney Noble, Jenn Ozawa-Hanson, Amanda Thompkins, Pat Wells, Margaret Woley

Count Us In Survey Locations

There were 46 Count Us In survey locations in 2014! Many thanks to the agencies and community partners listed in Appendix C.

For more information on the Committee to End Homelessness Youth and Young Adult Initiative, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/homelessYYAinitiative>.

